



Evaluation of the EU's cooperation with Georgia 2014-2020

The **European Union (EU)** is the largest donor to Georgia. Its portfolio grew significantly from a committed amount of EUR 150 million in 2015 to EUR 225 million in 2020. Between 2014 and 2020, the EU provided support to Georgia of a total of € 938.4 million.

€ 939 million



SIX SECTORS

The evaluation focused on all sectors of cooperation.



Agriculture and rural development



Public Administration Reform (PAR) and Public Financial Management (PFM)



Justice, Rule of Law (RoL) and Democratic governance



Economic development, market opportunities and skills



Connectivity (environment, climate change energy, transport)



Mobility and People-to-People Contacts

Cross-cutting issues: human rights, civil society and gender

Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations

CONCLUSIONS

STRATEGIC DIMENSIONS

C1. EU's cooperation with Georgia has been strategically sound and benefited in design and implementation from a **strong institutional setup**.

C2. The EU deployed a wide range of instruments, modalities, and funding channels that were available to support its cooperation with Georgia in a **strategic manner**

C3. The EU's approaches to support Georgia have been well chosen from **efficiency and learning** points of view. While EU visibility has been an issue, the EU Delegation has taken steps to improve it.

SECTORAL DIMENSIONS

C4. The EU's support has contributed to the achievement of **results** at outcome level in **all sectors**. However, implementation often lags behind legislative reform.



C4a. AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The positive impacts on both yield production and productivity have been less than expected and socio-economic effects difficult to document. However, EU support to Georgia has contributed to good progress in sanitary and phytosanitary measures and food safety, and has introduced innovative bottom-up approaches to rural and integrated territorial development.



C4b. PAR AND PFM

There has been progress contributing to increased accountability and transparency. Nonetheless, public confidence in government institutions has declined, and the capacity at many public institutions remains low. This suggests that public administration, as experienced by the ordinary citizen in daily life, continues to be deficient.



C4c. JUSTICE AND ROL

There has been significant progress in many areas of justice reform, such as GBV, juvenile justice, legal aid and access to justice. However, limited progress has been made in ensuring independence of the judiciary. There are clear instances of backsliding on democracy and human rights.



C4d. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The policy and institutional frameworks for SMEs and VET have improved, but synergies between the two were not sufficiently developed. The DCFTA has contributed to good progress in Georgia's approximation to the EU and the volume of exports, but there is limited evidence that Georgian exports are moving up the value chain.



C4e. CONNECTIVITY

EU cooperation has laid foundations for national legal frameworks and regulations in line with international norms and approximation to the EU acquis, but projects are slow to identify results as yet. This is mostly due to the nature itself of the infrastructure project process but also lack of capacity.



C4f. PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE CONTACTS AND MOBILITY

Visa liberalisation has worked well and performance in Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 has been very good. However, there have been limited positive impact on labour mobility and participation in the Mobility Partnership Facility was not up to potential.

C5. There has been **progress on gender mainstreaming** across sectors, but limited in blending operations, and the quality of mainstreaming sometimes lags behind standards. Mainstreaming of environment and climate change has been hampered by lack of awareness and, to some extent, resistance.

C6. Opinion trends reveal decline in trust of public institutions and democracy. Nonetheless, popular trust in Europe remains high and Georgian civil society has been resilient and proactive in this direction despite increasingly tense relations with state authorities.

RECOMENDATIONS

INSTRUMENTS, MODALITIES AND CHANNELS

The EU should continue to use the wide range of instruments, modalities, and channels that are available, including policy and political dialogue but with closer attention to effectiveness. It should design a clearer set of criteria for when Budget Support has achieved its purpose.

MAINSTREAMING OF CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

The EU should continue to improve the quality of mainstreaming cross-cutting issues, particularly gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE), but of other issues as well. It should be more explicit about its gender goals and better mainstream GEWE into Connectivity actions and blending operations.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The EU should continue to apply a broad approach, but better assess what sort of support, including in terms of private sector engagement, is appropriate going forward, keeping in mind the balance between the need for short-term results and the long-term nature of the development processes involved.

JUSTICE, ROL AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

The EU should critically assess where progress is being made and where it is not, identifying areas of backsliding and modifying the cooperation programme accordingly. It should adopt a more conditional approach to continuing cooperation on judiciary reform. EU support should encourage concrete civil society contributions to policy making, implementation and monitoring.

CONNECTIVITY

The EU should design an overarching strategy for Connectivity, particularly its international dimension. In consultation with financial institutions, it should develop more cohesive and complementary M&E frameworks, and devote greater effort to awareness raising and dissemination of information linked to the benefits of blending operations.

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CAPACITY-BUILDING EFFORTS

In assessing the need for capacity building and Technical Assistance, the EU should adopt a critical approach focused on their purpose and sustainability. Capacity building should be conditional on the beneficiary institution developing a coherent Human Resources development and retention plan and TA should be closely monitored for results.

POSITIONING THE EU COOPERATION PORTFOLIO

In the current international context, the EU and its national partners should better seize, monitor, and follow up on opportunities offered by Georgia's interest, expressed already in 2018, to come closer to the EU. Synergies between political and economic cooperation – each of which leverages the other – should be maximised.

PAR/ PFM

The EU should broaden and deepen support for PAR/PFM while better balancing near-term expectations, expressed in budget support conditionality, with the long-term nature of reform supported, and perhaps exploring new modality or better combining modalities.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, MARKET OPPORTUNITIES AND SKILLS

The EU should continue to diversify efforts to increase access to finance for SMEs, putting stronger emphasis on increasing the sophistication of SMEs, and strengthen the links between SMEs and VET.

MOBILITY AND PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE CONTACTS

The EU, together with Government and the EU MS, should re-examine the potential to use the Mobility Partnership to support a more holistic migration strategy.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The EU commissioned an evaluation of its cooperation with Georgia between 2014 and 2020. It aimed to better understand what has worked, what did not work and under what conditions, so that lessons could be learned and inform future EU strategies, programmes and actions in Georgia. The evaluation took place between March 2021 and September 2022, and was managed by DG NEAR's Performance, Results and Evaluation Unit. Nine evaluation questions guided the data collection and analysis which included the review of over 2000 documents and interviews with over 95 stakeholders.

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